



IWAF/3621  
**ORIGINAL**

In re application of:

SUSAN DAY et al.

Serial No.: 09/707,111

Filed: November 6, 2000

Group Art Unit: 3621

Examiner: J. Regan

For: **METHOD FOR RESOLVING ISSUES WITHIN A TEAM ENVIRONMENT**

Attorney Docket No.: 81061234 / FMC 1802 PUSP

**APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37**

**Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents**

Commissioner for Patents

U.S. Patent & Trademark Office

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is an Appeal Brief from the final rejection of claims 1-18 of the Office Action mailed on August 19, 2004 for the above-identified patent application.

**I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST**

The real party in interest is Ford Global Technologies, Inc.

**II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

The Appellants, their legal representatives and assignees are not aware of any other proceedings that may affect or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.8**

I hereby certify that this paper, including all enclosures referred to herein, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail, postage pre-paid, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents, Commissioner for Patents, U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on:

November 1, 2004  
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John S. Le Roy  
Name of Person Signing

John S. Le Roy  
Signature

### **III. STATUS OF CLAIMS**

Claims 1-18 have been rejected and are being appealed. No claims have been allowed or confirmed, withdrawn, objected to, or canceled.

### **IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS**

No amendment has been filed subsequent to the final rejection.

### **V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER**

Independent claim 1 recites a method for resolving issues between organizations in a virtual team room environment. In one embodiment, the invention facilitates online issue resolution in a project that involves multiple sub-projects including diverse and distributed team members. (Spec., p. 6, ll. 20-24.) One step includes electronically receiving an “issue document” from one of the team members. (Spec., p. 15, ll. 19-22.) Figure 9 illustrates an example online issue document having a basic information section 122, a content section 124, a reviews section 126, an active/inactive section 128, and an e-mail notifications section 130. One or more reviewers for the issue are selected from a list 142 of potential reviewers. (Spec., p. 16, ll. 9-11.) Dissemination of the issue document is restricted to the selected reviewer(s) for review. (*Id.*) After an interval of time, the member who submitted the issue document is automatically notified that the issue document has become dated. (Spec., p. 15, ll. 3-5.) Another period of passes after the notification before the issue document is automatically archived or deleted. (Spec., p. 15, ll. 7-8.)

### **VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL**

The Examiner rejected independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora at al. (U.S. 6,161,113 A) in view of the Appellants’ own admission, and further in view of Diamant et al. (U.S. 5,530,861 A). Appellants respectfully traverse this rejection on appeal because the cited references, separately and in combination, fail to recite the following elements of independent claim 1:

automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time; and

automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated.

Appellants contend that dependent claims 2-18 are patentable over the Examiner's proposed combination at least because these claims depend from patentable independent claim 1. (MPEP 2143.03.)

## VII. ARGUMENT

In the final office action mailed August 19, 2004, the Examiner cites Diamant at col. 6, ll. 37 to 66, and col. 9, ll. 27-35 to reach the following claim limitations recited in independent claim 1:

automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time; and

automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated.

However, Diamant does not teach or suggest these claim limitations. With regard to automatic notifications, Diamant does not teach automatic notifications where an issue document has become dated. While col. 6, ll. 37 to 66 teaches automatic archival of "tasks," Diamant makes no suggestion of archiving documents, or automatic notifications regarding same. This is a drawback to Diamant where, for example, an issue document is dated but should not be archived. Because Diamant does not provide for automatic notifications prior to the archival action (assuming Diamant has the capability to archive documents in the first place), the dated document could be improperly archived.

Reading Diamant beyond those passages cited by the Examiner, Diamant teaches user notifications only when a "new task" is assigned to a user. (Col. 15, ll. 32-35.) In this regard, Diamant teaches away from notifications relating to "old" matters, such as dated issue

documents. Other references to notifications found in Diamant relate to internal system notifications between “tools” to “notify one another of completion of operations.” (e.g., col. 4, ll. 32-41.) Neither of these passages teach or suggest the recited claim element.

The Examiner cites Diamant at col. 9, ll. 27-35 to reach the automatic deletion limitation of the above claim elements. However, Diamant does not teach automatic document deletion some period of time after a user has been notified that a document has been dated. To the contrary, Diamant only teaches deletion of “tasks” upon user intervention:

Users operate the task manager 122 to create, execute, and delete tasks.

(Diamant, col. 4, ll. 54-55, emphasis added.)

The passage at col. 9, ll. 27-35 referencing “DeleteAction()” is “automatically invoked by the task manager 122 upon the deletion of a task.” In other words, DeleteAction() is a pre-defined deletion script, that is only executed when the user first operates the task manager 122 to execute a delete task. Accordingly, this passage fails to describe and teaches away from the “automatic” aspects of the claimed invention. Diamant does not teach or suggest automatic document deletion some period of time after a user has been notified that a document has been dated, as independent claim 1 recites.

Because the cited references fail to teach all elements of the claimed invention as MPEP 2142 requires, the Examiner has failed to establish *prima facie* obviousness. Further, Diamant expressly teaches away from the claimed invention. The Appellants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

The fee of \$340.00 as applicable under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2) should be charged, as well as any additional fee or credit any overpayment in

connection with this filing, to Deposit Account 06-1510 (Ford Global Technologies, Inc.). A duplicate of this paper is enclosed for that purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

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November 1, 2004

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Enclosure - Appendices

## VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A computer-implemented method for resolving issues within a team environment, the team environment including a virtual team room providing computer access to the team environment by first members of a first organization and by second members of a second organization, organizationally disparate from the first members, the method comprising the steps of:

electronically receiving from one member of the first members and the second members an issue document;

providing to the one member a list identifying potential reviewers for the issue;

receiving from the one member a selection of a reviewer for the issue;

restricting dissemination of the issue document to the selected reviewer;

automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time; and

automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from the reviewer an escalation approval; and

escalating the issue document to a management function.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the potential reviewers comprise a leader of the virtual team room and a delegate of a leader of the virtual team room.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising forwarding a notification to the reviewer.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the notification comprises an electronic mail message.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising including in the notification a link to the issue document within the virtual team room.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the link comprises a hypertext link.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the first members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a first network and the second members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a second network, disparate from the first network.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the first network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the unsecured network comprises the Internet.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the secure network comprises a local area network.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the second network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the unsecured network comprises the Internet.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the secure network comprises a local area network.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the virtual team environment comprises a team work tool supported on a server.

16. The method of claim 1, comprising providing a security server coupled to the virtual team environment and verifying the identity of the first and second members using the security server.

17. The method of claim 1, comprising  
automatically generating one or more assignments relating to an issue specified in the issue document; and  
automatically communicating the one or more assignments to one or more team members associated with the issue.

18. The method of claim 1, comprising:  
defining a team calendar for the virtual team room accessible by team members, wherein the team calendar includes one or more specified events;  
linking one or more news items to one or more of the specified events; and  
upon a specified event passing, automatically deleting or archiving the one or more news items linked to the specified event which has passed.



**IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX**

The Appellants do not rely on any evidence in this appeal.

**X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX**

The Appellants, their legal representatives and assignees are not aware of any other proceedings that may affect or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.